

REMARKS

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-18, 21-28, and 30-38 are pending in this application, with claims 1, 7, 13, and 28 being in independent form. No amendment to the claims has been made. Reconsideration of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

Claims 1, 3-7, 9-18, 2-28 and 30-38 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Pub. No 2003/0122679 ("*Matsushima*") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,801,634 ("*Young*"), and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,697,695 ("*Kurihara*"). For the following reasons, reconsideration and withdrawal of this rejection is requested.

Independent claim 1 recites "a plurality of spatially distributed production units, each production unit comprising means for generating and indicating fault signals, each production unit being associated with a transmitting unit configured for wirelessly transmitting the fault signals, wherein two or more of said production units are arranged to form at least one group". Independent claim 13 recites a corresponding limitation, and independent claims 7 and 28 each recite a corresponding method step with similar limitations. As described in more detail below, the combination of the cited art fails to teach or suggest the above limitation because the fabrication apparatuses *Matsushima* are not each associated with a transmitting unit that is configured to wirelessly transmit fault signals.

The Examiner (at pg. 3 of the Office Action) asserts that:

Matsushima teaches ... a plurality of spatially distributed production units (fig. 6, elements 12a-12-c), each production unit comprising means for generating and indicating fault signals [0031-0032], *each production unit being associated with a transmitting unit configured for wirelessly transmitting the fault signals*, wherein two or more of said production units are arranged to form at least one group (fig. 6). (Emphasis Added)

Applicants disagree.

Matsushima relates to a plurality of fabrication apparatuses 12 arranged in series for performing a sequential processing of work units applied to a system. The Examiner considers the fabrication apparatuses 12 to be the claimed production units. The Examiner-cited paragraph [0031] of *Matsushima* explains that "when the transistor 36a is closed in response to the output of the lamp control unit 34a, a current flows through the coil 38a so as to close the switch contact 40a whereby the white lamp 20w is energized. It is understood that the lamp control signals issued from the controller 28 is quite simple because they merely indicate on-and-off operations of the lamps, and accordingly further descriptions thereof will be omitted for the sake of simplifying the disclosure". There is nothing in this section of *Matsushima* about a transmitting unit that is provided to each fabrication apparatus.

Matsushima (paragraph [0032], lines 1-4) explains that "[t]he lamp control signals, outputted from the controller 28, are also applied to the lamp control signal monitor 32, which comprises a parallel interface 42, a serial interface 44, a microprocessor unit (MPU) 46, and a memory 48". *Matsushima* (paragraph [0032], lines 4-13) additionally explains that "[t]he lamp control signal monitor 32 is operatively coupled to the display 22, a display control switch 50, and the personal computer 52. The computer 52 serves to load suitable software to the CPU 46, and applies date-and-time information to the MPU 46, and collecting the data stored in the memory 48. Further, the computer 52 is coupled to a plurality of lamp control signal monitors of the other fabrication apparatuses (not shown in FIG. 3 but best shown in FIG. 4)".

With reference to Fig. 4 of *Matsushima*, the fabrication apparatuses are indicated by reference numerals 12a, 12b, 12c. The displays are indicated by reference numerals 22a, 22b, 20. The PC is indicated by reference numeral 52. Reference numerals 20a, 20b, 20c in Fig. 4 are not expressly mentioned in the *Matsushima* specification. However, paragraph [0030] refers

to reference characters 20w, 20r, 20g, and 20b as lamps. In any event, reference characters 20a, 20b, 20c in Fig. 4 do not designate the claimed transmitting unit. Accordingly, there is no teaching or suggestion in *Matsushima* of “each production unit being associated with a transmitting unit configured for wirelessly transmitting the fault signals”, as recited in independent claim 1. Independent claim 13 recites “wherein each production unit is associated with a transmitting unit configured for wirelessly transmitting fault signals relating to said production unit”. Independent claims 7 and 28 recite a corresponding method step. There is no teaching or suggestion in *Matsushima* of these limitations.

Young has been cited to provide a teaching “that the monitoring controller can be separate and include a light tower”. *Kurihara* has been cited to provide a teaching that “a group of multiple units can be monitored by a single monitor”. *Young* relates to “a monitoring system that permits the early detection of an error condition that most probably will result in a batch of wafers that are out of specification and must be scrapped” (see col. 2, lines 21-24). *Kurihara* relates to “a laser device management system wherein data indicating the state of the laser device is acquired by gathering data at predetermined events, thereby allowing it to predict the lifetime of consumable components and predict problems with the laser device before they occur, from a remote location” (see col. 2, lines 35-40).

However, *Young* and *Kurihara* are silent with respect to production units that are associated with a transmitting unit configured for wirelessly transmitting fault signals. There are no transmitting devices in either *Young* or *Kurihara* with which to wirelessly transmit fault signals. Accordingly, the combination of *Matsushima*, *Young* and *Kurihara* fails to achieve the expressly recited subject matter of independent claims 1, 7, 13 and 28, because *Young* and *Kurihara* fails to provide what *Matsushima* lacks.

In view of the foregoing, independent claim 1, 7, 13 and 28 are patentable over *Matsushima, Young and Kurihara*, individually or in combination. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection under §103(a) are therefore in order, and a notice to that effect is respectfully requested.

In view of the patentability of independent claims 1, 7, 13 and 28, dependent claims 3-6, 9-12, 14-18, 21-27 and 30-38 are also patentable over the prior art for the reasons set forth above, as well as for the additional recitations contained therein.

Based on the foregoing remarks, this application is in condition for allowance. Early passage of this case to issue is respectfully requested.

Should the Examiner have any comments, questions, suggestions, or objections, the Examiner is respectfully requested to telephone the undersigned in order to facilitate reaching a resolution of any outstanding issues.

It is believed that no fees or charges are required at this time in connection with the present application. However, if any fees or charges are required at this time, they may be charged to our Patent and Trademark Office Deposit Account No. 03-2412.

Respectfully submitted,
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